



National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau

NCCIC

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CHOOSING a CHILD CARE CENTER or FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER

When you are working, you need to know that you have safe, loving, and stimulating child care that you can count on for your child. Studies have shown that high-quality child care can support your child's learning and can help your child grow socially, emotionally, and physically. In this document, you will find:

- Information about local child care resource and referral agencies;
- A list of selected national organizations that have information for you about choosing a child care center or family child care provider;
- Information about how to find the specific regulations and requirements of child care programs in your State;
- Information about national accreditation, which can help you identify high-quality child care programs; and
- Additional resources and publications to help you recognize and find child care to meet your family's needs.

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL (CCR&R)

■ Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies are local agencies that will help you find quality child care in your community that meets the needs of your individual family. They can give you information on State licensing requirements and sources of help to pay for child care. CCR&Rs provide help by phone, in person, and on the Internet. To find your local CCR&R agency, contact Child Care Aware, a national nonprofit project, at 800-424-2246. Information is also in English on the Web at <http://www.childcareaware.org> and in Spanish at <http://www.childcareaware.org/sp/>.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

■ **Child Care Aware**

800-424-2246

World Wide Web in English: <http://www.childcareaware.org>

World Wide Web in Spanish: <http://www.childcareaware.org/sp/>.

Child Care Aware is a national project that helps parents find their local child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agency. Let the operator know the county or city where you would like to locate child care. The operator will give you the name and number of the child care resource and referral agency which serves that community.

Child Care Aware has several brochures to help you find quality child care. The following brochures are in English and Spanish on the Web at <http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/>.

- *Give Your Child Something That Will Last a Lifetime... Quality Child Care* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/101e.pdf>); *Dé a su hijo algo que le durará toda una vida* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/101s.pdf>);
- *Choosing Quality Child Care for a Child with Special Needs* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/102e.pdf>); *¿Por qué es importante el cuidado de niños de alta calidad para mi hijo con necesidades especiales?* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/102s.pdf>);
- *All in the Family: Making Child Care Provided by Relatives Work for Your Family* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/103e.pdf>); *Todo queda en familia* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/103s.pdf>);
- *Matching Your Infant's or Toddler's Style to the Right Child Care Setting* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/104e.pdf>); *Cómo encontrar el tipo de cuidado de niños apropiado para su bebé o niño pequeño* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/104s.pdf>);
- *Selecting a Quality After-School Program for Your Child* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/105e.pdf>); *Cómo seleccionar para su hijo un programa de alta calidad para las horas después de clase* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/105s.pdf>);
- *Five Steps to Choosing Safe and Healthy Child Care* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/106e.pdf>); *Cinco pasos para encontrar servicios de cuidado de niños seguros y saludables* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/106s.pdf>);
- *Five Steps to Choosing Summer Child Care* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/107e.pdf>); *Cinco pasos para encontrar servicios de cuidado de niños para el verano* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/107s.pdf>);
- *Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) in Your Local Community* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/108e.pdf>); *Recursos y referencias sobre el cuidado de niños (CCR&R) en su comunidad local* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/108s.pdf>).
- *Finding Help Paying for Child Care* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/110e.pdf>); *Cómo encontrar ayuda para cubrir el costo del servicio de cuidado de niños* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/110s.pdf>);
- *A Guide for Dads: Give Your Child an Early Lead in Life... Quality Child Care* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/111e.pdf>); *Ser papá es un trabajo de mucha importancia* (<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/pdf/111s.pdf>).

■ **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

1509 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
800-424-2460

World Wide Web: <http://naeyc.org>

NAEYC is a nonprofit professional organization of more than 103,000 members dedicated to improving the quality of care and education provided to our nation's young children. NAEYC runs the National Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation, which is a voluntary, national accreditation system for high-quality early childhood programs. NAEYC has brochures to assist you as you make child care choices. These include:

- *A Caring Place for Your Infant* is available in English and Spanish [*Un lugar afectuoso para su bebé*];
- *A Caring Place for Your Toddler* is available in English and Spanish [*Un lugar afectuoso para su niño caminador*];
- *Choosing a Good Early Childhood Program*;
- *Finding the Best Care for Your Infant or Toddler*;
- *A Good Preschool for Your Child* is available in English and Spanish [*Un buen programa de educación preescolar*]; and
- *A Good Kindergarten for Your Child* is available in English and Spanish [*Un buen kindergarten para su niño*].

Additional information about NAEYC brochures is on the Web at

<http://naeyc.org/shoppingcart/default.aspx>.

■ **National Network for Child Care (NNCC)**

World Wide Web: <http://www.nncc.org>

NNCC is operated by the Cooperative Extension system. It offers over 1,000 publications and resources related to child care. Its Child Care Options section is on the Web at

http://cyfernet.ces.ncsu.edu/cyfdb/browse_2pageAnncc.php?subcat=Child+Care+Options&search=NNCC&search_type=browse. This section has links articles on the following topics:

- Checklists and Quality Issues for Parents;
- Child Care Centers;
- Family Child Care Homes;
- Family and Relative Care;
- Head Start;
- Infant and Toddler Care;
- Nanny Care;
- Preparing Your Child for Child Care;
- Preschool/Kindergarten;
- Resource and Referral Services; and
- School-Age Child Care.

■ **ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families**

2000 M Street NW, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20036

800-899-4301

World Wide Web: <http://www.zerotothree.org>

ZERO TO THREE is a national organization focused only on issues affecting infants and toddlers. The Parenting A–Z section of ZERO TO THREE’s Web site is on the Web at http://www.zerotothree.org/ztt_parentAZ.html. This section has links to the following audio interviews and articles about choosing child care:

- “Choosing Childcare for Infants and Toddlers” (*The Parents Journal* audio interview with Ron Lally, Ed.D.) (<http://www.zerotothree.org/interviews.html#care-sg>);
- “Providing Care for Young Children” (*The Parents Journal* audio interview with Stanley Greenspan, M.D.) (<http://www.zerotothree.org/interviews.html#care-sg>);
- *Choosing Quality Child Care* (http://www.zerotothree.org/choose_care.html);
- *Conversations in Child Care* (<http://www.zerotothree.org/vol25-1a.pdf>);
- Helping Toddlers with Peer Group Entry Skills (<http://www.zerotothree.org/peer.html>); and
- *Matching Your Infant’s or Toddler’s Style to the Right Child Care Setting* (http://www.zerotothree.org/match_care.html).

STATE REGULATIONS

Child care licensing agencies can give you information specific to local requirements and regulations to help you in choosing and monitoring child care. To learn of the specific regulations and requirements of child care programs in your State, contact the State office responsible for child care regulation. Contact information is on the NCCIC Web site at <http://nccic.org/statedata/statepro/index.html>. A directory of all State licensing agencies is also on the Web at <http://nccic.org/statedata/dirs/regoffic.html>.

In addition, the full text of all State child care licensing regulations is on the Web site of the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care at <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/states.htm>.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

One way for parents to identify high-quality child care programs is to look for programs that have achieved national accreditation. Accreditation is a voluntary process designed to improve the quality of child care programs by setting standards for quality. Achieving accreditation involves extensive self-study and validation by professionals outside the program to confirm that quality standards are met. There are several national accreditation systems for early care and education programs, including:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Academy for Early

Childhood Program Accreditation: 800-424-2460, ext.11360 or on the Web at <http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation/default.asp>;

■ National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC): 800-359-3817 or 801-269-9338, or on the Web at <http://www.nafcc.org/accred/accred.html>;

■ National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA): 800-505-9878, or on the Web at <http://www.necpa.net/>; and

■ National AfterSchool Association (NAA) [formerly the National School-Age Care Alliance]: 617-298-5012, or on the Web at <http://www.naaweb.org/>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

■ The For Parents section of the NCCIC Web site at <http://nccic.org/user/parents.html> includes information about finding child care nearby; looking for financial assistance to help with the cost of care; and looking for information about quality child care. The links within each topic include annotated lists of publications, organizations, Web sites, and other resources.

■ *Quality Child Care: Making the Right Choice for You & Your Child*, published by Parents' Action for Children (formerly the I Am Your Child Foundation), focuses on the importance of finding quality child care and contains tips for parents about choosing quality child care. The brochure features Rosie O'Donnell, and the video is hosted by Maria Shriver. These materials are available in English and Spanish. For additional information, contact Parents' Action for Children at 888-447-3400 or on the Web at <http://www.parentsaaction.org/index.cfm>.

■ *A Parent's Guide to Choosing Safe and Healthy Child Care*, published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is a checklist for parents to help them select a quality child care provider. This guide is on the Web at <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/RESOURCES/ParentsGuide.pdf>.

■ *Child Care Safety Checklist for Parents and Child Care Providers*, produced by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), is on the Web at <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/chldcare.html>. For additional information, contact CPSC at 800-638-2772 or on the Web at <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

The National Child Care Information Center does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource.